

Waukegan News Sun, March 5, 2005

Federal grants totaling \$748,000 for services to the area's Hispanic immigrant community are being announced today and Monday by U.S. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park.

Kirk announced a \$500,000 grant today to expand ChildServ services to immigrants in Waukegan. "ChildServ provides critical services to immigrants in Lake County," said Kirk. "This grant will allow ChildServ to enhance numerous programs that help immigrants and their families improve their lives."

Kirk was scheduled to announce the grant this morning at ChildServ's Waukegan office at 1103 Greenwood Ave.

He also was scheduled to meet with a group of area pastors this afternoon in Waukegan to discuss federal "faith-based" grants available for anti-gang initiatives.

Kirk is slated to announce a \$248,000 grant Monday at the College of Lake County in Grayslake to launch an Hispanic adult reading program.

The program, called Families Involved in Reading Stories Together (FIRST), targets Latino parents who cannot read English and was developed through Kirk's Latino Advisory Board.

The \$500,000 grant is to enhance and expand ChildServ services in Waukegan, Kirk said. The money will be used to expand a number of ChildServ programs including mental health counseling, family support, domestic violence intervention and prevention and citizenship services, he said.

Kirk worked with ChildServ to develop an immigration brochure warning Hispanic immigrants of

"notarios," individuals who act as licensed immigration attorneys, but are not. The brochure urges immigrants to seek ChildServ's assistance in filling out immigration paperwork.

"I want to thank ChildServ for their invaluable support to the immigrant community in Lake County," Kirk said in a statement.

ChildServ is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Methodist Church that advocates for the well-being of children. ChildServ's Family Immigration and Support program is the only immigration program in Lake County accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals.

"From helping immigrants become legal, permanent residents and citizens to providing shelter for victims of domestic violence, ChildServ is making a difference in the lives of children and their families."

The reading grant allows expansion of a program currently funded by the Illinois Secretary of State's office at the Waukegan, Round Lake and Zion public libraries, Kirk said. The grant will allow the program to offer more classes at these locations as well as to expand the number of locations where classes are offered, he said.

FIRST has five components: adult education (English as a Second Language), age appropriate developmental education for children, parenting skills, parenting and child-together activities and instruction on how to use the library.

The college's partner in both the existing and the federally-funded expansion is the Adult Learning Connection, which consists of the Waukegan Public Library and Literacy Volunteers of Lake County.

Representing CLC will be Gretchen Naff, president; William Griffin, chairman of the board of trustees; Rosa Reyes-Prosen, member of the board of trustees; and Mary Charuhas, dean of Adult and Continuing Education.

The College of Lake County is the county's largest provider of adult education classes (adult basic education, pre-GED classes, GED and English as a Second Language).